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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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MEMBERS OF HEROIN DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION INDICTED

Baltimore, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that 7 defendants have been indicted today for crimes arising from a heroin trafficking operation. The indictment charges the following defendants with participating in a conspiracy to distribute heroin from July to December, 2003:

Kofi Mensah, a.k.a. "Na-Na", age 35, a Ghanaian citizen, of New York City;
Edwin Ncube, a.k.a. "Edwin Afrifa", age 38, a Ghanaian citizen, of Elkridge and Laurel, Maryland;
Jamar Holt, age 27, of Baltimore, Maryland;
Kwasi Nti, a.k.a. "Chester", age 45, a Ghanaian citizen, of New York City;
Kwame Ampofo, age 21, a Ghanaian citizen, of Laurel, Maryland;
Kwesi Benson, age 23, a Ghanaian citizen, of New York City; and
Corrine M. Deku, age 19, a Ghanaian citizen, of Laurel Maryland.

Ncube and Holt were arrested on December 3, 2003 following distribution of approximately 1 kilogram of heroin by Ncube to Holt in Baltimore City, Maryland. Holt was in possession of approximately 20 egg shaped items found to contain heroin. Ncube was in possession of approximately \$110,000 cash following the meeting with Holt. The egg shaped packaging of the heroin is consistent with importation from West Africa.

On December 4, 2003 Nti and Mensah were arrested when they arrived in Baltimore from

New York to meet with Ncube. Also that day, a search warrant was executed at an apartment associated with Ncube in Laurel, Maryland. At the time of the search Benson, Deku, Ampofo were located in the apartment. Agents recovered approximately 15 kilograms of heroin from two duffel bags in the apartment. Some of the heroin recovered from the apartment was in the same egg shaped configuration as the heroin seized from Holt.

On December 12, 2003 a search warrant was executed at a New York location associated with Mensah. The search resulted in the recovery of approximately \$150,000.

Each defendant faces a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, a \$4,000,000 fine and at least five years of supervised release. No arraignment dates have been scheduled.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

The criminal charges in this indictment are the result of a joint investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Baltimore City Police Department and the United States Attorney's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Philip S. Jackson and Angela White.